

THE SCOTS KIRK PARIS



SKP finances

The SKP is one of just two churches in the International Presbytery which rely heavily on the Salvesen fund to pay the minister's stipend. All the international charges are expected to be self-sufficient. We are a long way off and our Salvesen grant is steadily decreasing year after year.

This means that we have to bolster our income from other sources. Bookings income is picking up again post-Covid but donations have fallen since our on-line services stopped.

Stipend aside, cleaning, electricity, internet and lift and pump maintenance bills all have to be paid regularly to keep the building functioning correctly and make it the welcoming place it is for us on a Sunday and all the other users during the week.

Please consider whether you could make a donation to the SKP or better still, a regular monthly bank transfer, no matter how small.

Details of the ways in which you can donate can be found on the SKP website.

Thank you for your support.

It is much appreciated.



A word from Laurence, our Interim Moderator

Warm greetings to everyone!

It was such a joy to be sharing in worship with you all on July 3rd...and to have the chance to spend time with members and visitors at the lunch afterwards!

The kids were great, the families warm and welcoming and the sense of fellowship, worship and purpose was tangible, and touching. Thank you for the welcome - and for the faithfulness of your service, the strength of your commitment, and the clear faith and love you so obviously feel. I look forward to my next visit with eager anticipation!

Being in Paris was a pretty good experience too! Is it a terrible thing to say that, after Venice, it's my favourite city in the world to visit! Come on, second to Venice is pretty spectacular!!!

Part of my duties on Sunday was to visit the Manse, on behalf of the Presbytery Fabric Committee. The Fabric convener lives in Bermuda...so that saved a shilling or two!

I thought the manse was lovely and Lindy cast a woman's eye over it...(am I allowed to say that?) - and we would both like to move in next week! No problems about it being a suitable Manse, that's for sure!

The new locum will be in place by the time you read this. Andrew and Irene are a fabulous couple and you will have great ministry, warmth, fun and humanity in their company.

Again...thanks for a lovely time shared...and I hope to see you again before too long...

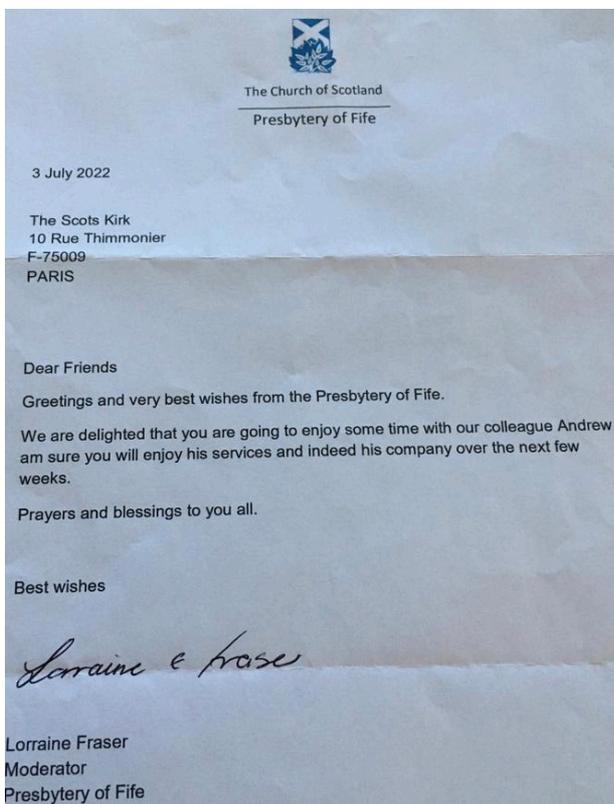
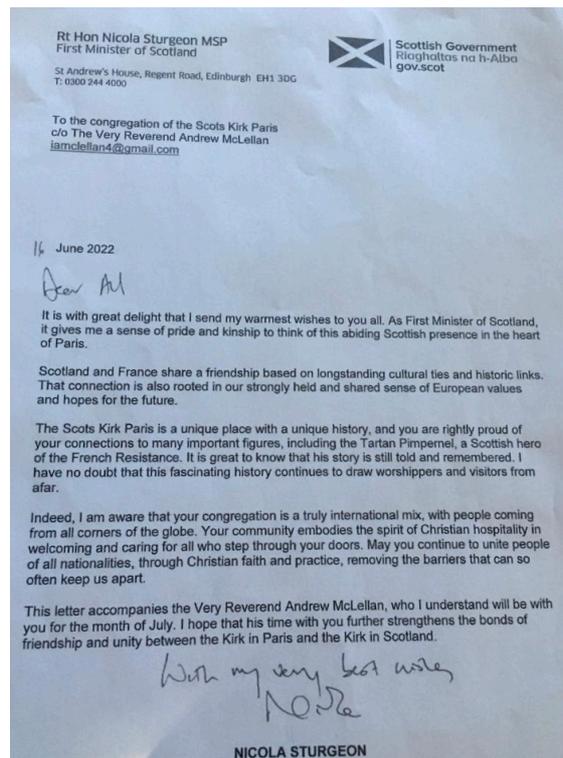
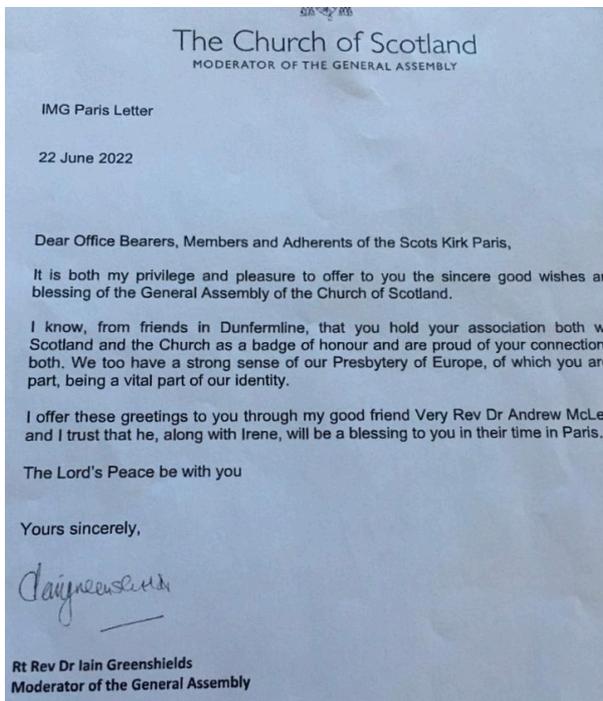
Love and blessings...

Laurence

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths."(Proverbs 3:5)

Letters to the SKP (see message from Andrew on p. 5)

The Presbytery of Fife, the Moderator of the General Assembly and Scotland's First Minister have all sent their good wishes to the SKP via Andrew, our locum. Here are the three letters he read out on his first Sunday, 10th July.



It is heartening to know that the work and witness of the congregation is being recognized in high places! Despite our small numbers we have a reputation for being friendly and welcoming and many people who have long since moved on continue to keep in touch and indeed support the church financially (as some of you reading this will know 😊).

We consider ourselves to be a family; we enjoy the time spent worshipping together on a Sunday and the fellowship over coffee afterwards. And we are there to offer support where it is needed.

The SKP has a WhatsApp group which all are free to join. If you would like to be added to the group, contact the administrator on 06 20 91 84 38.

A trip to Taizé

At the end of June our former minister, Jan Steyn, took a group of four young people from Scotland to Taizé for a week. They were joined by SKP elder Scott Macsween and his son Alex.

The group was able to travel thanks to the generosity of Logie Kirk, Stirling (Jan's new charge) and the SKP Taizé fund. This fund was originally intended to be used during Jan's ministry in Paris but of course Covid put paid to our plans! However, better late than never and how heartwarming to know that we, as a congregation, contributed to giving these young people an experience they will never forget.



"The Scots youngsters made a huge impact on all they met. It has been a much blessed week - new insights and discoveries, new friends and a week that will have an impact on the rest of their lives and those they meet". (Jan Steyn)

For more information about Taizé and the work being done by the brothers, visit the community's website at https://www.taize.fr/en_article6526.html.

Oliver (20) had this to say about his week:

"I decided prior to going to Taizé that I did not want to hear anything about the experience, I wanted to enter with no expectations. Although there were a few stories I listened to, all involving people going to Taizé and hating it, only to completely reverse their feelings and not want to leave a week later. I was interested in how a place could provoke such strong and yet polar feelings within the space of a few days. When I first arrived, I met two people from North America, one from the United States of America and the other from Canada. I was taken a little aback by how willing they were to travel for several hours in a plane to get there. I was intrigued by their reasoning to travel so far only to spend a week. A few hours later I was shocked once more, as I met an amazing Swedish group. They had travelled by bus for around 30 hours.



I couldn't fathom why people were willing to endure such long and uncomfortable journeys, just to repeat the same journey home a few days later. That night I set myself the task of answering that very question, why are people happy to travel under such conditions to come here? Especially after having had my first prayer. I looked around, struggling to find a significant reason to justify this collection of strangers across from the globe gathered under the same roof. My first inclination that night was people enjoyed the tranquillity Taizé offered. There was so much nature to take in and easy-going people, everything just felt simple and relaxing. Maybe it offered an opportunity to step aside from their usual hectic lives. On the second day I found the bible study moving. Here I was, in a group of people who were willing to listen to what I had to say. They were happy to hear me being vulnerable and contributed in with similar experiences they had. Taizé had created an environment for a short period of the day, were sharing insecurities and difficult emotions felt normal. Relationships were easily formed as a result. Day 3 arrived and I found another reason

why I felt people kept coming back to this place. The people you meet. There was something beautiful about seeing the people arrive at the same time as you, only to become friends a few days later. Day 4 was a similar discovery to day three. This time I discovered that those same people were very similar to myself. Taizé brought together a group of people who also enjoyed meeting new people and learning about new things, cultures, and languages. A group of people I have largely struggled to find everywhere else.

Day 5 offered the insight that people come here to reconnect with their faith. From listening to my new friends, I discovered a lot of them felt they had fallen out of religion slightly. They came to Taizé in efforts to

rekindle their beliefs. I found Taizé also allow for this. Praying three times a day, surrounded by people the same age and mentality as mine was incredibly refreshing. I believe this sparks the motivation to return home and diligently return to practising their religion once more. Day 6 offered me more new experiences. The people I had met were able to encourage me to try new things. Things my closest friends back home have failed to do for years. My new friends were able to gently push me out of my comfort zone, offering the opportunity to improve. Opportunities that I would be reluctant to take otherwise. On my final day I found a sincere beauty in my last prayer. I looked around, like I had done on my first day. The same group of people all sitting in the same room, in silence, sharing the last few moments they all had together. This time however instead of seeing strangers I saw faces I knew. Faces that had become family. Faces I simply did not want to part ways with in the next few hours.

To be transparent, I still have no answer as to why people keep returning to Taizé, all I know is I am one of them now.

Watch this short video of the group's stay <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndn7-xsXGUs>.

And now a word from Andrew, our locum



What a happy start to our Paris adventure our first Sunday was! From our point of view we can look forward to the remaining Sundays with enthusiasm.

We had spent our first Saturday night in the manse watching - with the whole world - frightening scenes of a land in crisis. The people of Sri Lanka had stormed the Presidential Palace and no-one knew what was to happen. Next morning, as we made our way along the Rue Bayard, we saw a group of people just leaving the church: people from Sri Lanka leaving their regular Sunday service in The Scots Kirk. I was able to assure them that Sri Lanka would be mentioned in our prayers that morning.

Then into the church to find two Scottish friends who had been at our wedding 47 years ago waiting for the service to start. When I chose the July Praise for the Scots Kirk before I left home I thought the 100th Psalm a good beginning: "All people that on earth do dwell" (very traditionally Scottish, and sung to a French tune). When I chose it I had not remembered that it was that very singing with which Rev Donald Caskie had begun the last service in The Scots Kirk four days before the occupation of Paris began.

I was pleased to read a message to the congregation from The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rt Rev Iain Greenshields. He had written "It is both my pleasure and my privilege to offer you the sincere good wishes and blessing of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland". I was also pleased to read another message to the congregation: from the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon. She wrote "It is with great delight that I send my warmest wishes to you all. As First Minister of Scotland, it gives me a sense of pride and kinship to think of this abiding Scottish presence in the heart of Paris".

To use the Moderator's words, it was for me both my pleasure and my privilege to conduct my first service in The Scots Kirk. Irene and I were very struck by the warmth of welcome we received and by the sense, obvious even to first-time visitors, of community and common purpose among the members of the congregation. I will remember these things long after I have forgotten the shattering of the glass as I dropped it from the pulpit to the floor during my first SKP sermon!

Jubilee tree

The Jubilee tree on the patio is doing well. Fortunately the high walls on either side protect it from the intense heat we are experiencing at the moment but it still needs to be watered regularly. All the duty elders have been asked to add this to their list of tasks on a Sunday but of course everyone is welcome to take a turn!

We have had a plaque made to identify the tree and we hope to have a small ceremony to install it when we are all back in September. Meanwhile, here is a sneak preview!

The tulip poplar (also called tulip tree) is actually more closely related to magnolia than either a tulip or a poplar. The reference to tulips comes from the shape of the greenish yellow and orange flowers.





Pot luck lunch

Our pot luck lunch on 3rd July was a great success. As is always the case we had more than enough to go round and there was a real sense of fellowship and enjoyment at being together after such a long time without our traditional pre- and after-holiday barbecues. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed.



As usual Gamelieh, who was at the lunch with her friend Claude, took the leftovers to distribute them to the needy. Here is the email she sent afterwards:

"Thank you Valerie for letting me distribute the leftovers. Claude the candlemaker is too proud to ask for help, but he survives on a state pension of 800 euros and after rent that leaves him only 300 euros to pay bills and food. He says he will make bread and butter pudding with the bread and that he always eats everything up. He can only afford to eat one meal per day.

After church and after watching the carnival down the Champs Elysées with Claude, I went to Hôtel de Ville as there are often homeless men there.

I saw a man fast asleep with a shopping cart with all his belongings neatly stored and so I left him a lot of food. While I was putting food into his cart another man covered in red spots came up to me and asked me if he could have some food too but he wanted cutlery which I didn't have! I gave him the box with the ham and quiche and told him he didn't need cutlery for that.

Then I caught sight of another homeless man searching in the dustbins for food and he was sad because there was nothing for him...so I ran after him and asked him if he wanted some food and he said yes right away. He was very glad to have the big bottle of water and he sat in a garage doorway to eat all the food I gave him.

There was nothing left for the man I usually give to on Rue des Martyrs but he gets a lot more people pass him by".

Gamelieh is a familiar figure on a Sunday as she always comes to church with her wheelie suitcase, ready to accept anything anyone might bring. If you would like to help, have a word with her first to make sure she can transport whatever it is you might have. Thank you Gamelieh for all your efforts.

Bags of Hope

The **Bags of Hope** project continues throughout the summer months.

We tend to think more of the homeless during the winter when the weather is cold but life is difficult for them all year round and all the more so in this intense heat.

Obviously we have to adapt the items we put in the bags over the summer - sunscreen, wet wipes, hand-held fans and refreshing water misters might be an idea.



Bags are available every Sunday in the vestry. If you're going to be away over the summer, why not take a couple with you and bring them back in September?

A reminder that of course contributions of food items are still most welcome and can be put in the basket at the entrance to the sanctuary.

